

**AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION**

Please amend the specification by replacement paragraphs as follows:

[02] As society, in general, ~~become~~ becomes increasingly reliant on communication networks to conduct a variety of activities, ranging from business transactions to personal entertainment, operators of these communication networks continually face the challenges of managing and optimizing use of network capacity as well as ensuring network availability to a diverse set of users with varying traffic requirements. The maturity of electronic commerce and acceptance of the Internet as a daily tool by millions of users have stimulated the emergence of numerous service providers.